

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

CERTAIN DANGEROUS TENDENCIES IN AMERICAN LIFE, AND OTHER PAPERS. 12mo, pp. 56-60. London: Osgood, & Co.

The contents of this volume, most of which have been published in successive numbers of the *Atlantic Monthly*, present a favorable impression at the time of their original appearance of the intelligence, fairness of mind, and literary ability of the writer. They abound in moral suggestions, presenting a vivid picture of some of the evils which now adhere to the customs and institutions of society, but offering no adequate remedy against them; and in many cases, their disastrous influence. As illustrations of certain aspects of American life, their deep and often lurid coloring, the bitterness of their perspective, and the earnestness and solemnity of their reflections, created a profound interest, which is not likely to be dimmed by their publication in a collective form. The last paper in the volume, entitled "New England Democracy," possesses a great degree of interest, as an exposition of a part of the methods and theories which have sprung up in the social formation of the time, and which number not a few advocates among the more impressive and less enlightened members of the community. Among these cannot be the optimistic view of human nature which assumes that the common people are sages, heroes, and saints. It is believed by many that if the multitude of men and the power in their hands were to rule, they would be benevolent and just. In their opinion the hearts of the people are always right; so popular wisdom or superior culture is required for the administration of government; the people have a passionate and enthusiastic devotion to justice; they are above all unworthy impulses, such as envy, self-hate, greed, and revenge; and in fact, in their conception the mass and multitude of prospects and parts. The persons referred to appear to imagine that men of wealth and education are of a nature essentially different from that of the people, and always so far as of themselves as to another class, with other motives, passions, and principles. The improvement of society, they suppose, is left back by the control of wealth and education. One effective element of the movement in question is the anticipation of benefits from the progress of science. They expect a millennium of universal plenty and happiness from the advance of scientific discovery. No imaginable invention for the production of food, the creation of wealth, and the saving of labor appears to them impossible. According to the observation of the writer, the persons who hold these views, if in comfortable circumstances, appear to cherish but little personal equality or aristocracy among the classes whom they denounce. They say it is the system which is to be condemned rather than the persons by whom it is sustained. But many of the poorer classes seem to feel a degree of exaltation in the prospect of overthrowing the classes by whom they have been oppressed. The writer offers some forcible and instructive comments on the opinions which he describes. The divine right of the people, he remarks, is only another form of the old doctrine of the divine right of kings. Its essence is unchanged. In his judgment of national life the doctrine means the divine right of the majority. As it was held under a monarchy that the king can do no wrong, it is held under the democracy that the people, that is, the majority, can do no wrong. But the doctrine of the divine right of a ruling power, with its supernatural equipment, is a crude and barbarous conception, which sets up a barbarous condition of society, and does not appear to have been improved in its modern form in association with democracy. The theory that the condition of the people will secure mankind against all dangers, error, and abuse, the evils which now afflict society and imperial civilization, is a convenient, but most absurd fiction. The art of government, or organizing the life of a nation and administering its affairs, is not so simple and easy a thing as is imagined, but rather one of the most complex and difficult of achievements. Another cardinal error is ascribing the production and preservation of wealth almost exclusively to labor. It is often said that laborers have created the wealth of the country, and are justly entitled to its ownership. But it is not generally understood how much the existence of wealth depends on other elements than mere muscular exertion. This part is not appreciated which is performed by intelligent men and capital, organizing business enterprises, in adapting products to the markets of the world, and in directing the labors of large numbers of men and the use of costly machinery so as not to impede the capital invested. Many laborers think they are in some way benefited by all the losses sustained by capitalism. But wealth is not so fixed and permanent a thing as is believed. It is a fluctuating asset, and does not bear rough handling. Any kind of property can be easily destroyed by mischievous legislation. It is supposed by many that legislation in the interests of labor must transfer most of the wealth now in the possession of rich men into the hands of the working people without impairment. But if such plans could be carried out, the author maintains that the result would be the gradual annihilation of the wealth of the country. There would no longer be any disparity of conditions between the rich and the poor, for all would be poor alike. Or organized industries would be destroyed. All machinery which required the cooperation of many laborers would be disused, and we should be obliged to return to the state of things when the people of our country depended almost wholly on agriculture and on such manufacture as could be carried on in their homes. The world's wealth cannot be preserved if the conditions under which it has been created are destroyed. The author brings his discussion to a close by some evidently wise suggestions in regard to the order of Nature and the conditions of life on the planet which has been given to man as a birthplace and a battlefield. We are born with innumerable wants, but no provision seems to be made for our having whatever we want. It is mighty comfortable to believe that everything is made for our happiness, and that the universe is pervaded by a wise and omnipotent tenderness. But there is another side to the picture. As a matter of experience and fact, there is measurable gain in the world, failure in action, cruelty of life, and a hideous amount of unquited wrong and suffering. Life is a stern, hard service; the wisest and noblest have learned to think little about happiness; and to give their strength to the work of the day, before "the night cometh in which no man can work." The pursuit of happiness, even when successful, tends to disintegration and chaos. The tendency that men have a right to be happy, and that they are wronged and oppressed unless they have everything they want, is the result of a defective analysis. The persons who hold this philosophy of life are doubtless sincere, but their thinking is erroneous. It does not follow that we are to make no efforts for the deliverance of mankind from oppression and injustice. The noblest work to which we can give our hearts in the world is the attempt to right what is wrong, and improve the conditions of human life. But the enthusiasts for progress should not forget the difficulties in the way. It is not so easy as they suppose to know what are the best means for bringing about the changes which all good men should desire to see accomplished. Nor should they fail to distinguish between objects that are really desirable and attainable, and those which human power in its undisciplined, "unchartered freedom" craves, but which are either impossible of attainment or disappointing and injurious if attained. The issue of this volume at the present moment must be regarded as a valuable offering to the cause of truth and progress, which requires clearness of counsel as well as decision of purpose and energy of action, and is no less important by rash and headstrong experiments than by apathy and neglect.

SWEDENborg AND THE NEW CHURCH. By JAMES BREWER. 12mo, pp. 140. Houghton, Osgood, & Co.

The doctrines of the New Church, as contained in the writings of Swedenborg, are not accepted by those who receive them, it is affirmed by the author, on the personal authority of their original teacher, or so to speak, their prophet. Swedenborg himself was the last man to assume any such intellectual supremacy. It was a cardinal principle with him that man should act in freedom according to his reason. Religion furnishes no ground of exception to this rule. Without perfect freedom of thought and speech to satisfy his own reason, no man can have genuine faith in any doctrine. But if a doctrine or principle is seen to be true in itself, if we are free to examine it in the exercise of our rational faculties, we shall adopt it for its own intrinsic worth, and accept it as divine without regard to external authority. On these grounds the teachings of Swedenborg are adopted by his followers, who believe that they constitute an entire new system of theology, which touches on every conceivable point of belief. With regard to the being and providence of God, Swedenborg teaches that he is the source of life to all other beings; not that he has made the universe from nothing, for that would be impossible, but he has created it from himself; that is, finite things are forms of life derived from his life; and he is the omnipresent power which sustains them all. Hence God must be in and with his creation, and not separated from it. The work of creation is forever going on. In a word, preservation is perpetual creation. The soul of life is from within outward. He who is the cause is likewise the source and centre of life. God is the life of the life of all things. He did not, from within, mould them into being, like a human artificer, and then set off and leave them; but his power with infinite variety filled and animated them, and it equally fills

and animates them now. A knowledge of the Divine is revealed in the knowledge of human nature. Man is made after the likeness of God; hence the human soul is an image of His Divine prototype. The soul presents an organic form of life, invisible to the bodily sense, whose actions may be classed under the two general heads of love and thought, or will and understanding. Every voluntary act of man is caused by anterior effort and thought. The primary motive principle is love. In other words, love is the very life of man. There is no thought or deed which is not prompted by love of one kind or another. It may be mere sensual appetite, it may be the lust of gain or dominion, or some other seat of self-love; or it may be the mensual love of the neighbor and a desire to do him good and to make him happy; but love of some sort is the soul. The soul is the life of the body, and love is the life of the soul. Such is the foundation of the system of theology which is set forth in this volume as the doctrine of the New Church. Mr. Reed calls it the "concrete" which have been based on these principles, with ample fullness of detail, but with no diffuseness of style, presenting his convictions in an exposition of transparent clearness and with no trace of a pedantic or negative spirit. The doctrines of Swedenborg are often regarded as the quiescence of mystical speculation or the suggestions of an era of fanaticism; but it is a remarkable fact in literature how many of their principal points have been written not only of peculiar fertility and force, but of singular beauty of expression and beauty of illustration.

THE STORY OF RELIGION IN ENGLAND, By SMOKE JEROME. 12mo, pp. 392. Chicago: Jansen, McClure, & Co.

In this volume, which is a reprint from the second London edition, the author traces the principal incidents in the history of religion in England from the introduction of Christianity into the island to the present time. It is written in an agreeable and popular style, abounding in personal sketches and anecdotes, with no ecclesiastical or sectarian partialities, and presenting a lively picture of the progress and influence of Christianity for successive centuries. The work is valuable for the ample and often curious information which it conveys, for its liberal and catholic spirit, and for the attractiveness of its execution.

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